

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13330 01 OF 02 131945Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01
USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 IOE-00 ACDA-07
/084 W

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O R 131645Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2084
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USLO PEKING
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 13330

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, WA, UR, UN, US, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA: SOVIET ANGLE

REF: STATE 215860

SUMMARY: BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS CAN
DO NO HARM, BT ARE UNLIKELY TO HAVE A PRACTICAL AFFECT
ON SOVIET POLICY UNLESS BOLSTERED BY REPRESENTATIONS FROM
THE AFRICANS MOST INVOLVED - THE FRONT-LINE STATES AND
THE LIBERATIONNN MOVEMENTS. WHILE THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE
INDUCED TO MODERATE OPPOSITION TO SOLUTIONS WHICH
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13330 01 OF 02 131945Z

COMMAND OVERWHELMING AFRICAN SUPPORT, THER STRONG
INCLINATION WILL BE TO CONTINUE POLICIES WHICH ARE
UNCOOPERATIVE FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW SOL LONG AS THESE
POLICIES MEET SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN APPROVAL. WITHIN THESE
GENERAL CAVEATS, MORE MIGHT BE EXPECTED FROM APPROACHES
ON NAMIBIA THAN ON RHODESIA. END SUMMARY

1. AS REFTTEL INDICATES, SOVIETS HAVE NO ENTHUSIASM FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA INITIATIVES IN WHICH THEY PLAY NO ROLE (AND IN THE FORMULATION OF WHICH THEY WERE NOT INVOLVED). MORE TO THE POINT, MOSCOW'S NEAR HYSTERIA DURING THE TIME OF THE AFRICAN INITIATIVES OF THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION IN THE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL OF 1976 CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED MOSCOW'S FEAR THAT THE AMERICANS AND THE BRITISH WOULD REPLICATE FOR THE SOVIETS A DEBACLE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE POST-1973 PERIOD WHEN THE U.S. EVADED THE POLARIZED SITUATION DESIRED BY MOSCOW AND THUS WEAKENED SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN THE M.E. THE IDEA THAT LAST MINUTE WESTERN DIPLOMACY MIGHT ENABLE A TRANSITION TO POWER IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS NOT DIRECTLY BEHOLDEN TO THE SOVIET UNION MUST BE ANATHEMA OT SOVIET POLICY MAKERS AND IDEALOGUES. THE SUCCESS OF WESTERN POLICY WOULD REPRESENT A SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET POLITICAL SETBACK AND WE FIND IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN MOSCOW'S ACQUIESCENCE IN THIS PROCESS WOULD HAVE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

2. THERE ARE TWO FACTORS, HOWEVER, WHICH FAVOR (A) A BILATERAL APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS DESIGNED TO MODERATE THEIR PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN EFFORT AND (B) A MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS FROM THE AFRICAN FRONT-LINE STATES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, OTHER IMPORTANT

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13330 01 OF 02 131945Z

AFRICAN STATES AS WELL AS THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION GROUPS THEMSELVES, TO MODERATE SOVIET BEHAVIOR DURING THIS CRUCIAL PERIOD.

3. BILATERAL APPROACH. WE SEE SOME GOOD AND AT LEAST NO HARM IN A BILATERAL APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS WHICH WOULD BE LIMITED TO INFORMING THEM OF OUR POLICY AND ITS GOALS, DESCRIBING THE SUPPORT WHICH WE BELIEVE WE HAVE SECURED FROM THE SIDES DIRECTLY INVOLVED, AND REMINDING THEM THAT SOVIET POLICIES DESIGNED TO MIS-LEAD PUBLIC OPINION AND TO PREVENT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES CONTRIBUTE NEITHER TO OR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP NOR TO A GENUINE AND DURABLE SOLUTION IN TE REGION. SUCH AN APPROACH MIGHT ALSO BE MADE SEPARATELY BY THE BRITISH. THE SOVIETS HAVE LONG CASTIGATED THE BRITISH FOR ABRO-GATING THEIR SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RHODESIA AND, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, THE BRITISH CAN NOW TRUMP THIS PARTICULAR SOVIET CARD.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 13330

4. MULTILATERAL APPROACH. A MORE PROFITABLE VENTURE
WOULD BE THAT SUGGESTED BY REFTTEL, OF ENCOURAGING THE
FRONT LINE STATES (AND THOSE FACTIONS OF THE NATIONAL
LIBERATION MOVEMENT WHOSE SUPPORT WE CAN SECURE)
THEMSELVES TO INFORM THE SOVIETS OF THEIR DESIRE TO
L LAY OUT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN AND TO ESCHEW ARTIFICIAL
OBSTACLES TO ITS ACHIEVEMENT (E.G., NEGATIVE
OR DISTRACTING INITIATIVES IN UNSC). DURING THE PAST
YEAR, THE SOVIETS IN THEIR DEEP CONCERN OVER THE
POSSIBILITY OF THE ANGLO-AMERICANS SNATCHING A SOVIET
VICTORY FROM MOSCOW'S PAWS, OCCASIONALLY SEEMED TO
MAKE POLITICAL STATEMENTS WHICH WERE DETRIMENTAL
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13330 02 OF 02 131947Z

TO THE SOVIET CAUSE (CRITICIZING UNNAMED "NEO-COLONIALIST"
STATES, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR ACCEPTING ARMS FROM THE

IMPERIALISTS). THE REPORTING FROM PODGORNYY'S AFRICA TRIP EARLIER THIS YEAR ALSO SEEMED TO REFLECT SOME AFRICAN SENSITIVITY TO THE SOVIET CONNECTION. WHILE IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO THINK THAT MOSCOW CAN BE INDUCED TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN PREPARATIONS FOR A VIOLENT SOLUTION SO LONG AS SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN GROUPS SEEK SUCH SUPPORT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES MIGHT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE MOSCOW TO MODERATE ITS POLITICAL AND MILITARY POLICIES DESIGNED TO EXACERBATE THE PRESENT SITUATION.

5. REFTEL ALSO SUGGESTS USING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT TO JOINT IN AN APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS ALONG THE LINES OF PARA 4 ABOVE. MOSCOW MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE OPINION OF THE AFRICANS WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, BUT THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE SO FOR THE OPINION OF NON-AFRICANS. WHILE MOSCOW MIGHT NOT WISH TO OFFEND GRATUITOUSLY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT BY REJECTING THEIR COUNSEL OUTRIGHT, NEITHER IS MOSCOW LIKELY TO ALLOW ITS FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS TO BE INFLUENCED BY SUCH COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. AN EXPRESSION OF OPINION BY IMPORTANT AFRICAN STATES LIKE NIGERIA WOULD, HOWEVER, CARRY WEIGHT.

6. IN ALL OF THIS, THERE IS A DISTINCTION TO BE MADE BETWEEN RHODESIA, IN THE FUTURE OF WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE A CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT, AND NAMIBIA. IN NAMIBIA, MOSCOW HAS SEEMINGLY PUT ALL OF ITS MONEY ON SWAPO AND ITS LEADER NUJOMA.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13330 02 OF 02 131947Z

THE WEST, INCLUDING THE U.S., IS ABLE TO TALK TO BOTH NUJOMA AND VORSTER. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION BASED UPON CONTACTS IN THE MFA AND THE AFRICA INSTITUTE, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE JEALOUS OF THE WEST'S ABILITY TO TALK TO VORSTER ABOUT NAMIBIA, BUT AWARE THAT (A) THEY CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT IT (EXCEPT CRITICIZE) AND (B) THAT THEIR CONNECTION WITH NUJOMA IS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG AND SWAPO'S ROLE SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT THAT SOVIET INTERESTS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WEST'S PRESENT DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERS. DUE TO MOSCOW'S GREATER CONFIDENCE WITH REGARD TO NAMIBIA, IT MIGHT THEREFORE BE POSSIBLE TO EXPECT A LITTLE MORE FROM THE NAMIBIA PORTION OF BOTH THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL APPROACHES DESCRIBED ABOVE. NUJOMA'S ROLE IN THIS WILL OF COURSE BE CRITICAL, AND THIS IS A FACTOR WHICH WE ARE UNABLE TO EVALUATE.

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Message Attributes

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